

Becoming Chilean: Hipólito Gutiérrez and the Construction of Chilean National Identity During the War of the Pacific (1879–1881)

War in History

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sagepub.com/journals-permissionsDOI: [10.1177/09683445231194038](https://doi.org/10.1177/09683445231194038)journals.sagepub.com/home/wih**Stefan Aguirre Quiroga** Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg, Göteborg,
Sweden

Abstract

This article investigates a memoir written in 1881 by Hipólito Gutiérrez, a semi-literate man from rural Chile, about his experiences as a soldier in the War of the Pacific (1879–1884). Through a microhistorical approach, it seeks to contextualize the memoir with the aim of uncovering how Gutiérrez constructed himself to be Chilean through his participation in the war. Unlike assessments made by past scholars, Gutiérrez cannot be considered representative of Chilean peasant-soldiers. The memoir provides a window into which researchers can see agency in action by a subaltern actor and how national identity is constructed from below.

Keywords

War of the Pacific, Chilean soldiers during the nineteenth century, construction of national identity, military narratives, rural Chile

Introduction

In the early twentieth century, the German-born Chilean linguist and folklorist Rodolfo Lenz (1863–1938) collected a manuscript written by a Chilean veteran of the War of the Pacific (1879–1884), one Hipólito Gutiérrez, from southern Chile. The manuscript narrates Gutiérrez's experience as a soldier during the war, from his enlistment through his 2 years spent on campaign alongside the Chilean army and his participation in three major battles of the war: the battle of Tacna (25 May 1880), San Juan and Chorrillos (13 January 1881) and Miraflores (15 January 1881). The importance of the

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narrative lay in the perspective of its author. Gutiérrez was a semi-literate man from rural Chile, and his written account stands as a unique rural voice from below in contrast to memoirs written by other Chilean soldiers who all belonged to the urban elite.

Yet it was not the social or military historical importance of the manuscript that led to its initial acquisition by Lenz. Although the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the manuscript are unknown, upon the death of Lenz in 1938, the manuscript passed on to another Chilean folklorist, Yolando Pino Saavedra (1901–1992). As a homage to his late mentor, Pino Saavedra studied, transcribed and ultimately published the manuscript with an accompanying study in the scholarly journal *Boletín de Filología* in 1947. In the publication, he gave the narrative the title it would henceforth be known under: *Crónica de un Soldado de la Guerra del Pacífico* (*Chronicle of a Soldier of the War of the Pacific*).¹ For Pino Saavedra, the importance of the manuscript laid in its historical dialectological and linguistic aspects. The semi-literate nature of Gutiérrez meant that the manuscript was filled with colloquial and provincial language in combination with a peculiar syntax and phonetic spelling, all of which in Pino Saavedra's interpretation were characteristics of popular Chilean Spanish from the south-central parts of Chile during the 1880s. While Pino Saavedra dedicates ten pages to a brief, historical study of the narrative, he dedicates forty-four pages to an in-depth dialectological study. The introductory historical study functions as a brief analysis and presentation of Gutiérrez, based entirely on the narrative alone, and conveys the image of Gutiérrez as a patriotic, religious peasant who voluntarily enrolled in the Chilean army and whose narrative is a typical example of the popular rural genre. The image established by Pino Saavedra continues to be the defining characterization of Gutiérrez, reflecting the stereotype of the popular Chilean soldier, *el Roto*, that had been established during the war and become popularized through speeches, songs, poetry, literature and monuments. The superficial representation of Gutiérrez as a simple peasant-turned soldier provided the basis upon which historians, authors and readers would base their understanding of the narrative and its place within the historiography of the war once the memoir was published in book form in 1956.²

From that point forward, through two additional editions of the memoir in 1962 and 1976, the figure of Hipólito Gutiérrez became a mandatory inclusion for Chilean historians when writing about the conflict and consequently turned Gutiérrez into the authentic, representative and patriotic voice for the Chilean rural population during the war. In the 1956 edition's prologue, written by historian Fernando Castillo Infante (1917–2005), Castillo Infante writes that the importance of the narrative is in allowing the reader to access the essential values of being a 'man of the Chilean people: simplicity, loyalty, courageous, and, most of all, profoundly patriotic'.³ In a review of the same edition, Professor Julio Durán-Cerda wrote that 'as Hipólito Gutiérrez does, so does the southern Chilean farmer speak, write, and feel'. A sentiment that a reviewer from *El Mercurio* would echo two decades later, 'Everything is said naturally, as if sprouting from authentic

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1. Hipólito Gutiérrez, 'Crónica de un soldado de la Guerra del Pacífico. Con un estudio dialectológico y notas históricas', *Boletín de Filología*, 5 (1947), pp. 7–114.
 2. Hipólito Gutiérrez, *Crónica de un soldado de la Guerra del Pacífico* (Santiago: Editorial del Pacífico, 1956).
 3. Gutiérrez, *Crónica*, pp. 9–10.

patriotism'.⁴ British historian Simon Collier saw Gutiérrez, 'a barely-literate country lad' who displayed a 'deep sense of Chilean patriotism throughout [his] book', as representative for the average Chilean soldier in the war. The narrative was sufficient to convince Collier that it was 'difficult not to conclude that national awareness in a fairly pronounced form had become deeply-rooted by the 1880s'.⁵ It should be no surprise in this context that when the Chilean General Army Staff published their official history of the War of the Pacific in the early 1980s, Gutiérrez was included as the representative of rural soldiers to reinforce the claim that 'recruitment [for the war] was relatively easy'.⁶ As recent as the 2010s did the esteemed Chilean historian and winner of the Chilean National History Award Sergio Villalobos throw praise upon 'that poor peasant from Chillán, almost illiterate, but who lived and breathed national patriotism and who thought it worthy to leave reminiscences of his actions'⁷ and who in Villalobos view provides the key 'to what Chile is'.⁸ The emphasis on patriotism, representative status and rural authenticity would be enduring attributes attached to Gutiérrez throughout the latter half of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century.

But who was Hipólito Gutiérrez? Can he be considered representative for the average Chilean peasant-soldier during the war? What can his narrative tell us about Chilean national identity in the late nineteenth century and its construction? Through a microhistorical approach, the purpose of this article is to investigate Gutiérrez's participation in the war and the content of his memoir to understand how he constructed himself to be Chilean. Through three thematical sections, I will investigate important elements to Gutiérrez's identity: his rural background, his religiosity and constructions about race and gender. This article does not presuppose that Gutiérrez was an innate patriotic Chilean, as previous scholars have characterized him as, but instead looks to emphasize his personal understanding of these elements in order to restore his agency within a broader historical context.

I argue that Gutiérrez constructed his nationalism through his experiences as a soldier and that the act of writing his narrative was a way to integrate himself within the larger Chilean community that had supposedly come together to defeat their enemies. Furthermore, I argue that as a literate volunteer, Gutiérrez was not representative of the Chilean peasant-soldier during the war as the traditional historiographical view of him argues. Gutiérrez had become a patriotic Chilean by the time he wrote his memoirs in early 1881, but the historical processes that put a uniform on his body and the different elements he was exposed to during his service that helped him understand himself as Chilean have been ignored in the past historiography in order to represent

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4. Julio Durán Cerdá, 'Crónica de un soldado de la Guerra del Pacífico', *Anales de la Universidad de Chile*, 107–108 (1957), pp. 434–435. 'Dos soldados en la Guerra del Pacífico', *El Mercurio* June 26, 1977, p. 2.
 5. Simon Collier, 'The Rise of Chilean Nationalism 1830–91', *Bulletin of the Society for Latin American Studies*, 12 (1969), p. 23.
 6. Virgilio Espinoza Palma, ed., *Historia del Ejército de Chile: El Ejercito en la Guerra del Pacífico*, V, (Santiago: Estado Mayor del Ejército 1981), p. 130.
 7. Sergio Villalobos, 'Reseña de *Armas de persuasión masiva*', *Historia*, 45 (2012), p. 299.
 8. Quoted in Ana María Stuven, *Chile disperso: el país en fragmentos* (Santiago: Editorial Cuarto Propio, 2007), p. 89.

Gutiérrez as the stereotypical humble peasant who was born a patriot. Gutiérrez's patriotism, I argue, was born during the war as his memoirs make visible.

The important place that the War of the Pacific inhabits in Chilean historical memory takes a nationalist form which has shaped the understanding of the average soldier during the War of the Pacific. An in-depth study of the memoir contributes to recent scholarship that seeks to nuance the orthodox understanding of the War of the Pacific through the study of subaltern perspectives. The strength of microhistory rests in the ability to criticize the general historical narratives that exist through one singular example. If the microhistorical approach sets 'out to enrich social and cultural analysis by introducing new, more complex, and more flexible variables',⁹ then a reinterpretation of Gutiérrez introduces one such complex variable into the study of nationalism, the rural world and the War of the Pacific.

The Rural World of Hipólito Gutiérrez in War and Peace

I, Hipólito Gutiérrez, in the month of September, in the year of 1879, on day 10 of that month, two friends and comrades met up, living in Coltón, *subdelegación* of Bulnes, youths of the same time, living very close to each other. We went to Chillán to lend our services to the government, with our entire pleasure, to go to the north, to Lima, to defend our homeland until dying or conquering for our Chilean flag. Two brothers accompanied us to Chillán; one was the brother of my friend and the other one was my brother. When we parted from them they cried when saying farewell, telling us that they would not see us again, and we, like *pechugones*, told them: —Do not cry, men, [be]cause we hope in God to return to our lands with life and health and we will see you again; no one dies unless the hour has come not even if we walk among bullets!¹⁰

The often-quoted beginning of Gutiérrez's narrative has been used by previous authors as a representative example of Gutiérrez's patriotism. In this section, I argue that it tells us more about his person than it does about his patriotism. In order to understand the possible reasons behind Gutiérrez's choice of going to war, we need to understand where he came from.

In 1879, Coltón was situated by the distributary of the same name, to the east of Bulnes and to the south of Chillán, in the province of Ñuble in the south of Chile. Coltón was not deemed of significant size or importance to be included in geographical dictionaries or maps over the province until the 1890s, by which time Coltón is described as the following: '*Fundo* in the department of Bulnes to the E. of its capital [Bulnes] and in proximity to the village San Miguel'.¹¹

Coltón being identified as a *fundo* is key in understanding the social status of Gutiérrez. A *fundo* is an alternative term for *hacienda*, a landed estate. What is today central Chile was found to be particularly suitable for agriculture by the Picunche and Mapuche peoples, amongst others, who lived on the land before the conquest and

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9. Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon & István M. Szijártó, *What Is Microhistory? Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 126.
 10. Gutiérrez, 'Crónica', pp. 60–61. *Pechugones* is a term that is similar to the act of being over-confident and thinking highly of yourself. All translations by me unless otherwise noted.
 11. Francisco Solano Astaburuaga Cienfuegos, *Diccionario Geográfico de la República de Chile* (Santiago: Repùblica de Chile, 1899), p. 162.

colonization of the region by Spain in the sixteenth century. What had begun as ranches turned into the landed estates that dominated the countryside once the focus of production became cereal cultivation, in particular wheat which Chile exported to Peru. It was not simply production that diversified. The labour on these farms had once consisted of enslaved indigenous peoples and, to a smaller extent, Africans. With the abolishment of the *encomienda* system and the demographic decline of the indigenous population due to European diseases, labour and assimilation, *haciendados* turned to new sources of labour. Previous forms of unfree labour were gradually replaced by service tenancy (*inquilinaje*) in which a family, commonly of either white or mestizo ancestry and of low economic status, was allowed to cultivate a plot on the estate land in return for providing labour for the *hacienda*. The service tenant (hereafter called an *inquilino*) would come to form a particular rural category and have a ubiquitous presence in rural Chile well into the twentieth century. Yet *inquilinos* did not represent the majority of the rural population in Chile. With a rising population number in the eighteenth century, the *haciendas* were unable to absorb the entire rural population as permanent tenants, turning those who were unable to acquire their own land or unable to become *inquilinos* into a rootless, floating population that moved up and down the Chilean coast in search of employment. Known as *peones*, the *haciendas* drew their seasonal workers from this population.¹²

Gutiérrez writes in the opening paragraph that he not only lived in Coltón but that he had grown up together with his friend and neighbour, who was later identified in the narrative as Sandoval. This stability points to the conclusion that Gutiérrez grew up in an *inquilino* household and that his father was likely an *inquilino*. This conclusion poses new challenges. As Arnold J. Bauer has written, ‘*Inquilinos* are the most anonymous, least visible of rural inhabitants.’ *Inquilinos* were not legally bound to the *haciendas*, nor did they have any written contracts with the landowners. Furthermore, they rarely appeared in account books, and ‘usually the *inquilinos*’ complaints or crimes were too insignificant to be recorded in the private records or in the provincial court’.¹³ The scarcity of records related to the *inquilino* experience has therefore not made it possible to find specific details about the Gutiérrez household. One such important detail would have been the specific labour arrangement that the household was involved in, an important theme within the historiography of nineteenth-century rural labour in Chile in which questions about the diversity, versatility and complexity of rural labour arrangements take the centre stage.¹⁴

It is possible, however, to paint a general picture of what Gutiérrez pre-war life could have looked like. Growing up as the son of an *inquilino*, Gutiérrez’s home would have been a modest shack situated on the access road to the *hacienda* or in the extremities of the large properties on the *hacienda* to ‘help keep the cattle in and the thieves out’. In addition to their home, the Gutiérrez household would have had a garden plot

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12. Arnold J. Bauer, *Chilean Rural Society: From the Spanish Conquest to 1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 3–21. Simon Collier & William F. Sater, *A History of Chile, 1808–2002* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 7–13.
 13. Bauer, *Rural Society*, p. 164.
 14. Andrea Ruiz-Esquide Figueroa, ‘Chilean Rural Labor in the Nineteenth Century. A Historiographical Essay.’, *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, 36 (1999), pp. 359–365.

(*cercos*) to grow food on in addition to a daily food ration as well as grazing rights for a dozen animals and land for sharecropping. Depending on the amount of land that an *inquilino* had, the more obligations he would have. It is an important task for an *inquilino* to provide daily and seasonal labourers. These *peones* would live in the shacks together with the *inquilino* household or in the open air. Family members could be obliged to work as well as a *peón obligado*.¹⁵

Sometimes between working on the *hacienda* and socializing with his friends and siblings, Gutiérrez learned how to read and write. The last Chilean census before the war established that approximately 73.8 per cent of men and 80.2 per cent of women were illiterate in 1875. In the province of Ñuble, 30.3 per cent of men and 19.2 per cent of women could read, while 27 per cent of men and 15.9 per cent of women could write.¹⁶ Although Gutiérrez is often described as semi-literate, with Pino Saavedra describing the text of his manuscript as total orthographical anarchy, it should still be acknowledged as a considerable achievement for a young man from an obscure *hacienda* in rural Chile to have written a cohesive and complete narrative. Furthermore, he shaped his narrative according to a formal book structure involving a dedication page and chapters with titles, implying a familiarity with books. In all probability, Gutiérrez attained his literacy through some sort of schooling. The 1860 Primary Education Law (*Ley de Instrucción Primaria*) formalized a system of state-run education which extended free, non-obligatory public education through the country. In its most basic form, the education consisted of classes in reading, writing and arithmetic. In 1875, there were seventy-five schools in the province of Ñuble with 4,844 enrolled students out of a school-aged population of 28,666. Macarena Ponce de León Atria writes that Ñuble was one of the provinces with the least number of enrolled students in the country. The construction of schools in urban centres was prioritized over rural schools, and the ones that were built were few and inaccessible to children who would have to walk long distances to reach them. Schools on the *hacienda* would have been a rare sight, but some were constructed and paid for by the landowner. An additional obstruction for the children of *inquilinos* to access education was the labour demand put on them by their parents who needed all household members available to them to fulfil the demands put on them by the landowner.¹⁷ These factors help explain Gutiérrez's limited schooling.

Whether he attended a rural school, a *hacienda* school or a school in Chillán, literacy held a vital role for Gutiérrez's crafting of a national identity. In accordance with Benedict Anderson's theoretical model on the spread of nationalism, the ability to read would have granted him access to a national print language, the basis for national

15. Bauer, *Rural Society*, pp. 48–54.

16. Oficina Central de Estadística en Santiago, *Quinto Censo Jeneral de la Población de Chile: levantado el 19 de abril de 1875* (Valparaíso: Imprenta del Mercurio, 1876), pp. 614–615, 659–660.

17. Macarena Ponce de León Atria, 'La llegada de la escuela y la llegada a la escuela. La extensión de la educación primaria en Chile, 1840–1907', *Historia*, 43:2 (2010), pp. 450–486. María Loreto Egaña Baraona, *La educación primaria popular en el siglo XIX en Chile: una práctica de política estatal* (Santiago: LOM, 2000), pp. 113, 130–132.

consciousness. Through the act of reading, Gutiérrez could go beyond the simple gossip and local news that were spread on Sundays by *peones* and *inquilinos* alike by the *pulperia*, the *hacienda* store and the rural social centre. By reading newspapers, national or provincial such as *La Discusión* and *El Ñuble*, Gutiérrez could start to imagine a national community that extended beyond the borders of Coltón.¹⁸ To what extent did other *inquilinos* imagine themselves being part of the same national community? This is a question that is difficult to answer, and the topic of integration of rural workers into the larger society surrounding them remains a central theme in the historiography of rural Chilean labour.¹⁹ Some historians, like Bauer, contend that *inquilinos* were isolated from the world outside of the *hacienda*. William F. Sater argues that Chile was far from a unified country with a highly developed sense of national identity, asking, ‘Where would the *roto*, who composed the majority of the nation, learn about Chile: in a non-existent school? From a book which he could not read? At best, provincial, not national sentiments, predominated’.²⁰ As one anonymous writer asserted in 1861, the *inquilino*:

[is] the *citizen* of his *hacienda*, and he is indifferent to everything that happens somewhere else. [...] [The *inquilino*] never designates his nationality as *Chilean*, but by the name of the *hacienda* to which he belongs. If a *guaso* would be transported to Paris or London and was questioned there about the nation of his birth, be certain that he would not name Chile at all, and that the answer would be that of Peldegüe, Chacabuco, Huechun or Chocolan.²¹

As we can read in the opening paragraph of Gutiérrez’s narrative, the tendency to identify yourself in connection to your *hacienda* still held sway. In fact, Gutiérrez takes more care in identifying the location of Coltón than he does in identifying himself, overlooking both his own age and his maternal surname.²² Yet Gutiérrez’s narrative is undoubtedly patriotic in its content, as made evident by the opening paragraph that speaks of defending the homeland. Is it possible to identify other social processes that could have influenced his decision to leave home to volunteer?

In the 1870s, rural Chile was undergoing drastic changes. After brief wheat export booms in the late 1840s and early 1850s, large grain exports to England starting in the mid-1860s allowed Chile to compete in the international grain trade. What made this possible were external factors such as reduction in freight rates and an increase in world

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18. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016), pp. 22–46.
 19. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 22–46.
 20. William F. Sater, *Chile and the War of the Pacific*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), pp. 76–77. Bauer 1975, p. 55.
 21. Italics in original. Atropos, ‘El *inquilino* en Chile’, *Revista del Pacífico*, V (1861), p. 102. *Guaso*, commonly spelled as *huaso*, is a term used to refer to rural Chileans, and sometimes more specifically to rural horsemen.
 22. In accordance with Chilean naming customs, each person is given two surnames: a paternal surname and a maternal surname. Since Chileans do not change their last names upon marriage, but instead give their first, paternal surname to their children, this helps identifying individuals in records. Gutiérrez, presenting himself only with his paternal surname, has made it difficult for researchers to find a positive match of his identity in any existing records.

prices as well as geographical advantage: Chile harvested grain during the European winter, meaning that Chilean exporters could place grain on the English market in spring for advantageous prices before harvesting had begun in the Northern Hemisphere. In addition to this, there were internal factors. The most important factor was the economic modernization of Chile. Improvements in transportation, such as the construction and expansion of railroads, as well as in communications and some agricultural improvements such as irrigation canals and partial mechanization all contributed to connecting a rural place as obscure as Coltón with domestic and world markets.²³

For *inquilinos*, the expansion of agriculture and the growing market meant increased labour demands put on them by landowners. Those who had to provide more workers for the *hacienda* had to pay them with the wages they received from their own work on the hacienda, consequently increasing poverty amongst *inquilinos*. New *inquilinos*, drawn from family members of other *inquilinos*, were absorbed into the haciendas but given reduced land allotments and a more restricted sharecropping. Consequently, Claudio Robles-Ortiz argues that the *inquilinaje* system underwent a process of proletarianization in which *inquilinos* and their entire household were gradually transformed from service tenants into a source of permanent wage labour. In 1874, the grain export to England reached its peak. Although it would continue until 1880, it would decline at the onset of the 1874–1878 world depression that Chile fell victim for. Additional misfortune came in the shape of disastrous weather conditions that between 1876 and 1878 produced crop failures, increased food prices and starvation. These events coincided with other phenomena that left its enduring mark on the Chilean rural social world: the mass migration of *peones* from southern Chile to work in railway construction or in the mining and nitrate industry in northern Chile, Peru and Bolivia. The improved infrastructure and transportation facilitated the migration not only to the north but also to the cities where women in particular found better opportunities than they would have found on the rural *hacienda*. Mass migration caused labour shortages on the *haciendas* during the harvest and increased wages for *peones*.²⁴

Robles-Ortiz describes this process as integrating ‘the rural areas into the nationwide labour market created by Chile’s economic modernization’.²⁵ The changes brought on by the wheat export boom, improvements in infrastructure, the world depression, as well as rural mass migration connected rural, inland Chile with the rest of the nation and to the world. In the process, the rural labourers of southern Chile became the victims of economic dislocation and dispossession. Augusto Orrego Luco, in a critical essay written in 1884 about the causes behind the widespread poverty in Chile, wrote

The nomadic peon has left the farms; it is the son of the inquilino who roams the land in search of work and living conditions less harsh than those they find alongside their parents. [...] In all aspects it was a violent economic crisis, which diminished incomes, decreased employment, and

23. Bauer, *Rural Society*, pp. 62–82. Collier & Sater, *History of Chile*, pp. 76–94.

24. Claudio Robles-Ortiz, ‘Agrarian Capitalism and Rural Labour: The Hacienda System in Central Chile, 1870–

25. Robles-Ortiz, ‘Hacienda System’, p. 503.

directly increased poverty at the same time that it awoke new aspirations and opened a road to the city to escape this terrible situation. It was natural that the son of the inquilino would abandon the farm to search for a job and would begin to constitute the proletariat.²⁶

The outbreak of the War of the Pacific in early 1879 coincided with a disrupted social and economic world for sons of *inquilinos*. As news about the war and the call for volunteers went out from Chillán, it was these social conditions that likely framed the choice to volunteer that Gutiérrez took. Concurrently with the desire to fight for Chile, there is a desire for a new life. As Gutiérrez and Sandoval made their way to Chillán, they followed in the footsteps of other young men and women from rural areas who took to the cities to find new opportunities. In the case of the two childhood friends, they came to the city to look for war.

On 12 September 1879, Gutiérrez and his friend officially enrolled in the Civic Battalion Chillán, commanded by Juan Antonio Vargas Pinochet (1814–1880).²⁷ Regional military units, like the Chillán battalion, were formed across Chile during the war as part of the expansion of the Chilean army. Regional units were enthusiastically supported by local authorities who saw an opportunity to gain political distinction through the provision of a regional military unit. Nationalist historiography describes this period as being one in which patriotic volunteers filled the battalions as a show of unity in the face of imminent danger. In the province of Ñuble, as in other provinces, reality looked very different. Some provinces received a lot of recruits while others received very few. Beyond the patriotic volunteers, there were those who joined because they needed money, food and clothes. To attract volunteers, recruiters offered a bounty, an *enganche*, to those who needed additional enticement. On many occasions, prisoners were asked to volunteer to be soldiers. When these strategies did not suffice in attracting recruits, recruiters and local authorities turned to forced recruitment. The first who fell victim for the press gangs were the least desirable elements in society: drunkards, criminals and vagabonds. It did not take long for recruiters to turn their attention to the common peasant, forcibly seizing *peones* and *inquilinos* alike as they raided *haciendas*. In Chillán, for example, anyone walking outside after 10 PM was arrested by the city police and forced to become soldiers. As Sater describes it, ‘Recruiters spread through Chile with the speed and often the same consequences as smallpox’. Men ran from recruiters upon their arrival, finding refugee in cities, other *haciendas* where landowners hid them, or in the mountains. Others violently resisted impressment. Men who had been seized in one province could be sent to a civic battalion in a completely different province to fill the demand for recruits.²⁸ Large sections of rural labourers therefore had a different

26. Augusto Orrego Luco, *La Cuestión Social* (Santiago: Imprenta Barcelona 1884), p. 39. The first sentence is my translation. The remaining quote (translated into English) is taken from Elizabeth Quay Hutchison et al, eds., *The Chile Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), pp. 188–189. Translation by Trevor Martenson.

27. Gutiérrez, ‘Crónica’, p. 61.

28. Sater, *War of the Pacific*, p. 75–82. Andrés Rodríguez Figuerora, ‘Forjar y forzar identidades nacionales: El reclutamiento militar durante la Guerra del Pacífico en el mundo rural’, *Pensamiento Crítico*, 1 (2001), pp. 10–23. Carmen McEvoy, *Guerreros civilizadores: Política, sociedad y cultura en Chile durante la Guerra del Pacífico* (Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Diego Portales, 2011), pp. 101–118.

experience than Gutiérrez and his friend who willingly enlisted. Yet it would be misguided to assert as Andrés Rodríguez Figueroa does that, ‘The volunteer element was practically non-existent in a world dominated by social relations of domination [land-owners] and subordination [rural laborers].’²⁹ It is important to recognize that while nationalist historiography has overlooked the subject of forced recruitment in rural Chile and fully embraced the concept of the heroic *roto chileno*, it would be wrong in turn to minimize the rural labourers who volunteered for a variety of patriotic and pragmatic reasons. The number of forced recruits that Gutiérrez served alongside in the third company of the Chillán battalion is unknown. Gutiérrez makes no mention of the motivations of other recruits except that of himself and his friend. As Gutiérrez and his battalion left Chillán to start the long journey north, he describes the atmosphere as being festive, with soldiers dancing and singing, concluding that ‘it seemed to us like we were going to a party’.³⁰

In light of modern historical scholarship, it appears improbable that the Chillán battalion only consisted of patriotic volunteers. How can we explain the absence of forced recruits in Gutiérrez’s narrative? A probable explanation lies in the construction of his narrative. Considering that it was written at the height of Chilean victory in the war, Gutiérrez was influenced by what historian Carmen McEvoy refers to as *la guerra cívica*, the notion of a unified nation in arms and an important component in the *nacionalismo civilizador* narrative of wartime Chilean society.³¹ Although Gutiérrez would not hold back in writing about ill-disciplined soldiers, he never once questions their commitment or contribution to the Chilean cause. To have mentioned soldiers who did not want to fight for Chile would have denigrated the cause that Gutiérrez had fought for.

Catholic Nationalism

Gutiérrez’s deep Catholic beliefs has a strong presence throughout the narrative, yet past authors have only viewed Gutiérrez as religious without considering how wartime Chilean Catholicism influenced his nationalism. This section examines Gutiérrez’s religious devotion within the context of Chilean Catholic nationalism during the war in order to see how his pre-war religiosity facilitated the assimilation of nationalist concepts.

Gutiérrez’s religious devotion becomes particularly evident when considering his devotion for the Virgin Mary, under the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Virgen del Carmen, henceforth referred as such). The devotion of the Virgen del Carmen in Chile has a long history that stretches back to the arrival of the first Augustine missionaries in 1595. While the Virgen del Carmen would be proclaimed as the patron saint of

29. Rodríguez Figueroa, ‘Forjar’, p. 17.

30. Gutiérrez, ‘Crónica’, p. 61.

31. Chilean nationalism during the War of the Pacific conceptualized the war as a crusade for the honour and values of western civilization that Chile represented. Peru and Bolivia were characterised as pre-modern societies who in their savagery and corruption had committed treachery against Chile. As a superior nation, as well as a superior race with imbued virile masculinity, it was Chile’s mission to civilize Peru and Bolivia. To accomplish this, every citizen had to do their duty as part of a nation in arms. The war was justified in the name of civilization, progress, and Catholicism. McEvoy, *Guerreros*, pp. 89–228.

Chile by the Vatican in 1923, she had already taken this position during the War of the Pacific. Based on the image of the Virgin Mary as a protective deity, the Virgen del Carmen came to be represented as the protector and ally of Chile and her soldiers in their struggle against Peru and Bolivia. During the war, the Virgen del Carmen came to serve as a metaphor for Chile itself in the national imagination, with Santa Rosa de Lima serving the same metaphorical role for Peru. In this celestial battle, the Virgen del Carmen was considered superior to Santa Rosa de Lima, and this superiority was a reason for Chile's success.³² In the national press and in religious ceremonies, religious discourse was used to reinforce the idea of the war as a just war. The war was conceptualized as both a defensive holy war against the treacherous Bolivia and Peru and a moral crusade against their savagery. The Chilean concept of civilization was woven into the religious discourse, portraying the Chilean nation as more virtuous and moral than their enemies. McEvoy notes that one of the most important elements of Catholic nationalist discourse was the exaltation of heroism. Soldiers were reconceptualized as virtuous Christian warriors, whose true reward was the promise of eternal life. The warriors followed in the footsteps of the Christian saints and martyrs that had come before them, finding moral regeneration through suffering.³³

The religious processions that Gutiérrez would have known from his pre-war life found a continuation in those performed for soldiers. The religious services served to spread a unified nationalism, blurring the lines between the two different strands (Chilean and Catholic). To illustrate this point further, we turn to a specific example. On the Tacna battlefield before engaging the enemy, Gutiérrez heard 'a discourse that the Mister Priest was holding for the entire army that was enjoyable and broke hearts, and viva Chile!, and we threw our kepis in the air'.³⁴ Although Gutiérrez does not elaborate on the content of the discourse, it is clear that it aroused both patriotism and affection in the moments before one of the bloodiest battles of the war was fought. The newspaper *El Ferrocarril* gave the following description of the same ceremony:

When the divisions moved out of the camps that they had occupied on the night between the 25th and 26th, the chaplains Mr. Fontecilla, Marchant Pereira, Fábres, Valdes, turned towards the troops, and after exhorting them to fulfil their duty as Chileans and Christians, they blessed them, our soldiers bursting out in enthusiastic *vivas* to Chile, while the bands tuned up the national anthem and the Yungay anthem, after which the advance began[.]³⁵

One of the chaplains attending the ceremony, Ruperto Marchant Pereira, provides the following account:

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- 32. David Coronado Canales, 'Guerra, Intercesión e Intervención Divina': La Imagen de La Virgen del Carmen y de Santa Rosa de Lima durante la Guerra del Pacífico en la Lira Popular Chilena', *Revista de Historia Universidad de Concepción*, 20:1 (2013), pp. 95–102.
 - 33. Coronado Canales, 'Virgen del Carmen', pp. 90–102. Carmen McEvoy, 'De la mano de Dios. El nacionalismo católico chileno y la Guerra del Pacífico, 1879–1881', *Histórica*, 28:2 (2004), pp. 84–135. McEvoy, *Guerreros*, pp. 165–228.
 - 34. Gutiérrez, 'Crónica', p. 77.
 - 35. *El Ferrocarril*, June 6, 1880. Quoted in Academia Chilena de la Historia (ed.), *Boletín de la Guerra del Pacífico: 1879–1881* (Santiago: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1979), p. 731.

The chaplains walked along the lines and after exhorting the soldiers, they gave them the holy absolution: —'Before you go and die for your country, the moment has come to raise your hearts to God!...' I doubt, my friend, that there could exist a more solemn moment than the one I have described. [...] The musicians broke out the national anthem; a large *viva Chile!* echoed in compact unison and kepis flew in the air.³⁶

What was on the surface a religious ceremony for soldiers going into the battle takes a deeper nationalistic and martial turn in the mixed discourse of Catholicism and Chilean nationalism. The soldiers were blessed and given absolution in the capacity of Christian Chilean soldiers. The collective identity as Chileans (tied to Catholicism) is emphasized further by the inclusion of the Chilean national anthem and the Yungay anthem, the latter being an anthem written in honour of the Chilean victory over the combined Peruvian–Bolivian Army at the Battle of Yungay in 1839 during the War of the Confederation (1836–1839). The inclusion of the Yungay anthem alongside the national anthem further reinforces the notion of a collective, historical, and martial identity, rooted in the War of Independence and the War of the Confederation. Through a combined religious and patriotic ceremony, Gutiérrez would have been able to imagine himself as part of not only the Chilean nation in the present but also in the past and in the future.

Gutiérrez's assimilated the Catholic nationalist rhetoric and rituals present in the Chilean army during the conflict through his attendance of hybrid religious–nationalist ceremonies which in turn created incitement to credit divine intervention for granting Chilean victories. In the words of Gutiérrez: 'We triumphed with God's favour and that of my Lady del Carmen. *Viva Chile!*' Through his devotion of the Virgen del Carmen as protector of himself and his fellow soldiers, Gutiérrez also assimilates the nationalistic concept of the Virgen del Carmen as an ally of Chileans, imagining himself as being part of that protected community. Gutiérrez attributes the escape of danger to God and the Virgen del Carmen, confirming his belief in their protection and mercy. Gutiérrez found agency in his religion and attributes his survival to divine providence. In considering their blessings throughout his time as a soldier, Gutiérrez saw it necessary to ask permission from God and the Virgin del Carmen to allow him to write his narrative in 1881. After all, they had in his words, 'allowed' that 'nothing happened to us'.³⁷

Race and Masculinity

Race and masculinity laid at the centre of Chilean nationalist discourse during the war. Previous interpretations of Gutiérrez's memoirs have overlooked his construction of race and gender in relation to his enemies and how this in turn influenced how he came to see himself as Chilean. This section will examine the development of Gutiérrez's construction of the 'Other' during the war, as made visible in his memoirs, and how he understood what it was like to be Chilean.

36. Paz Larraín Mira & Joaquín Matte Varas, eds., *Testimonios de un Capellán Castrense en la Guerra del Pacífico: Ruperto Marchant Pereira* (Santiago: Centro de Estudios Bicentenario, 2004), pp. 171–172.

37. Gutiérrez, 'Crónica', p. 74, 76, 83, 86.

The word ‘Peruvian’ (*peruano*) appears only twice in Gutiérrez’s narrative. Instead, he utilizes the word *cholo* (*cholos* in plural) to refer to his Peruvian enemies. In 1875, Zorobabel Rodriguez in his *Diccionario de Chilenismos* (*Dictionary of Chilenisms*) defines *cholo* as referring to a ‘low and crude people, originating from the mixture of Spanish and indigenous blood’.³⁸ Rodriguez explains that the *cholo* is the Peruvian equivalent of the Chilean *roto* but that there are notable differences between the two: The *cholo* has a ‘weak complexion, thin legs and a bulging belly’, while the *roto* was ‘robust, muscular and [with a] lean body’.³⁹ In summary, Rodriguez writes, the *cholo* is ‘an Andalusian engrafted into a Peruvian Indian’, while the *roto* is ‘a Basque engrafted into an Araucanian’.⁴⁰ Rodriguez’s description touches on both class and race, ostensibly referring to lower-class *mestizos* in both countries. Yet the separation that Rodriguez makes between the two national terms prejudices the Chilean *roto* over the Peruvian *cholo*, exalting the Chilean physical virtues over the lesser Peruvians. In less than a decade after Rodriguez’s publication, as a consequence of the War of the Pacific, the terms *cholo* and *roto* would gain deeper, racialized connotations that would separate them even further to the point where they would not be equivalents – they would be opposites.

‘It can be said that the *roto* was like white bread, if not French [bread], in the midst of that racial mixture from which the lower Peruvian people has formed.’⁴¹ Chilean journalist Daniel Riquelme’s description of the difference between the Chilean *roto* and the Peruvian population at large during the occupation of Lima aptly shows the evolution of the term *roto* from meaning a lower-class *mestizo* to signifying a white soldier, set apart from the apparent racial mixture that surrounded him in Lima. This development during the war is part of what Ericka Beckman calls the creolization of imperial reason, defined as ‘a rhetorical strategy by which Chilean elites ventriloquized a key set of images and tropes belonging to a larger repertoire of nineteenth-century European imperial discourse’.⁴² Beckman argues that the Chilean elites during the war adopted the vocabulary of scientific racism and the concept of a clash of civilizations, a conflict between inferior and superior races. To achieve this, the Chilean nation was represented as being more European (and therefore more modern and civilized) than Peru.

This was particularly evident, the argument goes, in the supposedly racially homogeneous population of Chile. This created a contradictory elite representation of the Chilean soldier, encapsulated in the image of the *roto*, in which the pre-war lower-class racialized subject was included in the national community and defined as being of the same race as the Chilean elite (akin to McEvoy’s *guerra cívica*), while at the same time being placed at somewhat of a distance from the elite by emphasizing the positive values of the soldier’s bi-racial heritage in the same vein as Rodriguez’s dictionary entry. ‘And even though creolized imperial reason depends upon articulations of whiteness’, writes Beckman,

38. Zorobabel Rodriguez, *Diccionario de Chilenismos* (Santiago: Imprenta del El Independiente, 1875), p. 170.

39. Rodriguez, *Diccionario*, p. 170.

40. Rodriguez, *Diccionario*, p. 170.

41. Daniel Riquelme, *Bajo la tienda* (Santiago: Editorial del Pacífico, 1958), p. 119.

42. Ericka Beckman, ‘The creolization of imperial reason: Chilean state racism in the War of the Pacific’, *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 18:1 (2009), p. 75.

'racial value also sought recourse to a set of inner racial "truths".⁴³ The 'racial truths' were tied to the non-visual traits and superior values supposedly inherent in the *roto*. The evolution of *roto* from a negative, general term referring to rural labourers that were an impediment to Chilean progress to a positive, romanticized term referring to the heroic Chilean soldiers who were at the forefront of civilization emphasized these 'racial truths'. The *roto* was brave, hardworking, loyal and obedient to their superiors, reflecting everything that had made Chile a progressive, civilized nation. Superiority was therefore not only limited to the colour of one's skin, but in the 'inner racial truths' that makes one part of the national community. While this reinterpretation of the *roto* took place in the early years of the war and spread through various means, like in the texts written by Daniel Riquelme, it became mythologized in the years after the war alongside the idea of Chilean racial superiority, cemented by the victory in the War of the Pacific.⁴⁴

The claim of Chilean superiority over their neighbours in the north, anchored in the notion of civilization and progress, lies at the centre of wartime Chilean nationalism. Beckman's creolization of imperial reason and the reinterpretation of the *roto* as a heroic figure were elite constructions of national identity. While the mythologized and imagined *roto* would live on as a safe representation of the Chilean soldier during the War of the Pacific, the real-life basis of the *roto* would return to their former status as the internal enemies of the elite with the birth of the Chilean labour movement at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ With few exceptions following McEvoy's argument as the Chilean soldier as an ethnologist, the scholarship about Chilean racism during the War of the Pacific has overlooked the creation of the Other from below by ordinary Chilean soldiers. It is therefore important to look closer at Gutiérrez's narrative.

Gutiérrez's first encounter with a Peruvian came in the form of a corpse. In April 1880, he reached the Peruvian coastal town Pisagua which had been the scene of an amphibious assault on 2 November 1879, by Chilean forces that culminated in the first Chilean victory on Peruvian territory. The scars of that battle were still fresh; Gutiérrez notes:

They put them all [houses] on fire in the entry that the Chileans made in October the year 79 for there was the first battle most cruel and most bloody that was for there was much slaughter of both Peruvians and Chileans that there still were many bodies thrown on the street and on the slope of the hill, legs, heads of men and women, but these were enemies because the Chileans had all been buried.⁴⁶

Surprisingly, Gutiérrez describes the scene at first as if he was an outside observer. It is not the amphibious landing that 'we made', but that the 'Chileans made'. Both sides

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- 43. Beckman, 'Creolization', p. 82.
 - 44. Claudio Véliz Rojas, 'Bajo la tienda (1958): la representación subalterna del 'roto' como fundamento de nacionalidad para el siglo XX chileno', *Diálogo andino*, 48 (2015), pp. 7–15. Beckman, 'Creolization', pp. 73–87. Jeffrey L. Kleiber, 'Los "cholos" y los "rotos": actitudes raciales durante la Guerra del Pacífico', *Historica*, 2:1 (1978), pp. 27–34. Juan Carlos Arellano González, 'Discursos racistas en Chile y Perú durante la Guerra del Pacífico (1879–1884)', *Estudios Ibero-Americanos*, 38:2 (2012), pp. 240–263.
 - 45. Beckman, 'Creolization', p. 86.
 - 46. Gutiérrez, 'Crónica', p. 70.

suffered, he notes, and the only difference between them was the fact that the Chilean dead had been buried, while the Peruvians had been left to the elements. All Peruvians are labelled as enemies, however, despite the fact that non-combatants (women) are also noted as dead alongside men. His understanding of who makes legitimate targets is therefore extended to the entire Peruvian population. Gutiérrez makes no observations at this stage of appearance or attributes that would have differentiated himself from the bodies he encountered. To him, they were simply enemy corpses. The second, and last time, Gutiérrez uses the word Peruvian, it is to note the absence of them in the Peruvian port of Ilo a few days later.⁴⁷ One possible explanation for this detached view of Peruvians in comparison to how they were viewed in nationalist imagery is that Gutiérrez had not yet faced the enemy in combat. Although he labels Peruvians as his enemies, he does not racialize them. The only danger Gutiérrez had faced up until this point in April 1880 was the unforgiving Atacama Desert. On 26 May 1880, Gutiérrez would face his Bolivian and Peruvian enemies for the first time at the Battle of Tacna.

The first mention of *cholos* in Gutiérrez's narrative happens when Gutiérrez observes the effect of the Chilean artillery on the enemy combatants.⁴⁸ Throughout his dramatic account of participating in the battle of Tacna, Gutiérrez uses *cholos* interchangeably with 'enemies', adding no emphasis on one term over the other. Although Gutiérrez does not describe his enemies with any specific attributes, or 'racial inner truths', the usage of the term *cholo* denotes a racialization of the enemy. At this point, it is unclear whether his usage of the word corresponds to the pre-war definition of the term or elite discourse. Gutiérrez's baptism of fire is a watershed moment in his understanding of the enemy which would continue to develop over the coming months. After Tacna, Gutiérrez never uses the word Peruvian again, not even for mundane observations.⁴⁹

In Gutiérrez's account of the Battle of San Juan and Chorrillos (13 January 1881), his usage of the term develops further. In the heat of the battle, he writes that:

It pleased us to see the large battlefield and in such order that all our people went by regiments in columns when we saw the middle trenches that and the *cholos* went running and leaving the cannons alone. *Viva Chile!* We advanced lightly [now] that those cowardly *cholos*, *maricones*, ran off, and gave fire and running up ahead, the *cholos* ran from one trench and changed [to] other trenches that they had towards the rear on all the hills there were they had trenches and fougasse and torpedoes that we could not free ourselves from the fougasse.⁵⁰

The characterization by Gutiérrez of his enemies as cowards is similar to the elite discourse that painted Peruvian and Bolivian soldiers as cowards and Chilean soldiers as

47. 'There were no Peruvians in the port'. Gutiérrez, 'Crónica', p. 70.
48. 'We saw that the grenades fell among the enemies and the grenades blew up and the *cholos* opened in one part to another and they [Chilean artillery] threw them another one, after which they hastily ran towards the camp that they had because they were distant from their army.' Gutiérrez, 'Crónica', p. 77.
49. '[...] where you could see the houses; it was known that it was the camp of the *cholos*.' '[...] there was more than thousands of boxes that the *cholos* had left behind when they had run up ahead.' Gutiérrez, 'Crónica', p. 83.
50. Gutiérrez, 'Crónica', p. 88.

brave heroes. This is the first time a specific negative attribute is attached to his enemy. It is doubtful, however, that Gutiérrez was influenced by elite discourse at this stage. Considering the context of the account, there is a more probable explanation to the labelling of his enemies as cowards. The Peruvian soldiers retreat upon the advance of the Chilean soldiers, but they still put up a fight. What caused the resentment of Gutiérrez in his retelling of the battle was likely the use of torpedoes and fougasse (*polvorazos*). In the context of the War of the Pacific, these two terms refer to forms of early landmines which were improvised by the Peruvians and used for the first time during the Battle of Arica (7 June 1880). This was considered by Chilean soldiers as a coward's way of waging war.⁵¹

Gutiérrez's understanding of his enemies as cowards would be reinforced a few days later in the morning of January 15 when the Battle of Miraflores broke out. At this point, the Chilean army was on the outskirts of Lima. The Chilean victory at San Juan and Chorrillos led to a temporary truce between the two armies, arranged by foreign envoys from Lima. At approximately 10 AM (Gutiérrez writes that he heard artillery fire at around 12 PM), the truce was broken.⁵² Whether it was the Chileans or the Peruvians who fired first is still in debate, Gutiérrez was firm in his conviction that the Peruvians were to blame.

In the final battle of his war, Gutiérrez reaches the culmination of his understanding of the enemy and explains explicitly for the first time what differentiates a Chilean from a Peruvian. Peruvians are cowards and traitors, breakers of peace, whose treachery is in their very nature. They do not dare to fight the Chileans face to face, resorting to hidden explosives and hiding in trenches. In adding traitorous as a 'racial inner truth', Gutiérrez is drawing not only from personal experience but also from Chilean nationalist discourse that framed the outbreak of the war around Bolivian and Peruvian treachery. In the opening page of his narrative, Gutiérrez described going to war in order to 'defend our homeland', representing himself (and the Chilean nation) as victims of their treacherous enemies. The honour of Chile is at stake, and honour becomes a principal socio-cultural characteristic of Chileans in Gutiérrez's narrative, who do not resort to entrenchments or landmines, nor do they turn their backs to their enemies. Gutiérrez puts additional emphasis on the bravery of the Chileans, who he represents as fearless and unstoppable despite the attempts of his enemies to stop him through their treacherous ways. Ultimately, Gutiérrez's claims about his enemies culminate in his own proclamation of being Chilean, 'the Chileans that we are', and therefore imbued with all the positive traits that the Peruvians are missing. From commenting upon the corpses of Peruvians that were still scattered in Pisagua less than a year before, Gutiérrez now spoke of the corpses of *cholos* that scattered the landscape.⁵³

Honour and bravery were tied by Gutiérrez to Chilean masculinity. In the original 1875 definition, the physical attributes of the *cholo* were contrasted against the strong,

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51. William F. Sater, *Andean Tragedy: Fighting the War of the Pacific, 1879–1884*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), pp. 250–256.
 52. Sater, *Andean Tragedy*, p. 291–292. '[...] when around noon we heard some cannon shots from the direction of Lima.' Gutiérrez' *Crónica*', p. 90.
 53. '[...] [we saw] dead *cholos* on the entire road, in the corners, on the hills, in the entire valley'. Gutiérrez, 'Crónica', p. 89.

masculine attributes given to the *roto* and described as the largest point of differentiation. To be a *roto*, therefore, is not only to be a racialized subject but also to be a virile man. During the war, the idea of virile masculinity was explicitly tied to that of being Chilean and *nacionalismo civilizador*. Gutiérrez continuously extolls his masculinity from the beginning of his narrative. As he leaves his mother crying in Chillán, Gutiérrez writes that, ‘I did not fell a single tear, [my] heart strong and I strengthened my chest, and I took with me some advice, that the man who cries only makes himself unhappy’.⁵⁴ In his account of the Battle of San Juan and Chorrillos, as well as Miraflores, Gutiérrez reinforces his own masculinity as well as that of the Chilean soldier by calling his enemies *maricones*. The word is a homophobic term for homosexuals, which found a widespread usage in contemporary Chilean satirical press where it was used to ridicule homosexual men. As Carolina González Undurraga has shown, the concept of homosexuality in Chile was seen against the dichotomy of civilization and savagery. Homosexual men were considered irrational and animalistic and therefore savages in comparison to the civilized heterosexual man. Furthermore, González Undurraga writes that homosexuality was perceived as a menace to Chilean society. You could not be homosexual *and* Chilean, because ‘to be Chilean is to be virile’.⁵⁵ By describing his enemies as *maricones*, Gutiérrez was denying their masculinity while simultaneously animalizing them and presenting them as uncivilized. Gutiérrez’s feminization of Peruvians comes during a time when, as McEvoy has written, Chilean soldiers were undergoing a process of feminization and exoticization of Lima that was portrayed as a woman to be conquered by Chilean men.⁵⁶ Through the process of feminization, Gutiérrez was not only extolling the virtues of Chilean masculinity but also asserting the right to wage war against Peru on the basis of their savagery. Chilean superiority was ultimately what Gutiérrez claimed for himself and his comrades.

Between April 1880 and January 1881, Gutiérrez constructed the Other. The change in Gutiérrez’s discourse surrounding his enemies between April and June 1880 hints at the fact that he was basing his narrative on notes or a diary written at the time. This would explain the gradual development of his knowledge about the Other that is chronicled in his narrative. What *cholo* meant to Gutiérrez changed over time. It is safe to assume that Gutiérrez considered his enemy as a racialized, feminized subject with specific ‘racial inner truths’. Gutiérrez’s accumulated knowledge coincided with certain elements of elite discourse, but it never became a reflection of it. While it is highly likely that he was influenced by the nationalist discourse that was spread through newspapers and in speeches, it should not be overlooked that Gutiérrez could simultaneously have been influenced by the conversations he had with his fellow comrades. Whether he took up the usage of the word *cholo* from another soldier or from a newspaper is therefore difficult to determine. Gutiérrez’s personal experiences also contributed to his understanding of

54. Gutiérrez, ‘Crónica’, p. 61.

55. Carolina González Undurraga, ‘La sexualidad como representación y las representaciones de la sexualidad. La construcción del sodomita en Chile, 1880–1910’, in Alejandra Araya Espinoza, Azun Candina Polomer & Celia Cussen, eds., *Del nuevo al viejo mundo: mentalidades y representaciones desde América* (Santiago: Universidad de Chile, 2007), pp. 184–199.

56. McEvoy, *Guerreros*, pp. 282–284.

the Other, which is an additional factor to consider. Regardless of the transmission form of knowledge, Gutiérrez explicitly identifies himself as Chilean, imbued with specific attributes that he denies his enemies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Hipólito Gutiérrez was a young man with limited schooling from the *hacienda* Coltón, in the province of Ñuble, in southern Chile. Like the son of an *inquilino*, a service tenant, Gutiérrez came of age during the 1870s which was a tumultuous time for the Chilean countryside, characterized by increased labour demands, weather disasters and economic displacement, but also by the extension of public education and infrastructure. Connecting inland rural Chile with the rest of the nation through literacy, communication and transportation facilitated not only mass migration but also the ability to imagine a national community. These factors combined to make Gutiérrez a willing and active participant in the war. Yet he made up only part of a complex wartime recruitment system that included the widespread impressment of young rural labourers into the Chilean army. Between October 1879 and March 1881, Gutiérrez constructs and reinforces his national identity as a Chilean through his participation as a soldier in the War of the Pacific. The production of nationalist knowledge about the Other, which in turn reinforced his national identity, took several different forms. The influence of Catholic nationalism on Gutiérrez, a young man with deep religious beliefs, also made him extoll the superiority of the Chilean cause through the representation of himself as a Christian warrior, protected by God and the Virgen del Carmen, the patron saint of Chile and the Chilean army. Gutiérrez's understanding of his enemy developed over time, ultimately creating an enemy that was known as a *cholo*, a racialized Other, that was imbued with specific negative socio-cultural characteristics that portrayed him as a feminized man, a coward and a traitor with no honour. The Chileans, on the other hand, were virile, honourable men who fought face to face. Gutiérrez conclusively sees himself as belonging to the imagined community known as Chile, his martial experiences reinforcing this understanding. A change had occurred from September 1879 when it was only him and his friend Sandoval who volunteered to go up north in defence of Chile to January 1881 when Gutiérrez could proudly proclaim that 'like the Chileans that we are', they fought as honourable men.

Gutiérrez is not and should not be considered representative of soldiers from rural backgrounds who fought in the War of the Pacific. As a literate man, Gutiérrez set himself apart from many, if not the majority, of his peers. As a volunteer, Gutiérrez willingly made the choice to enlist, while many *peones* and *inquilinos* ran away to avoid being forcibly enlisted. While thousands of rural men returned to their homes after the war, Gutiérrez returned home to Coltón with a manuscript that narrated his experiences. Gutiérrez's act of crafting a narrative was an exceptional choice, even for literate soldiers. The majority of Chilean military memoirs from the War of the Pacific were written years after the conflict, while Gutiérrez began to write while the Chilean army was still occupying Lima at the height of its victory over Peru. By historicizing Gutiérrez's narrative, it has been possible to both reject the idea of Gutiérrez as representative for the peasant-soldiers in the War of the Pacific and to highlight the nationalist elements that made Gutiérrez an attractive subject for Chilean nationalist historiography. By writing his

narrative, Gutiérrez did not simply imagine himself as being part of the Chilean imagined community. He makes a claim of inclusion into the national unity. Gutiérrez constructs himself as a Chilean and crafts a national identity through his narrative. The chronology of the narrative makes it possible to see this crafting in progress, as I have shown in the case of Gutiérrez's Othering of his enemy. In this perspective, the narrative becomes that of a transformative experience. In similarity to other rural labourers, he makes the choice to be independent and breaking away from his *fundo*, just like other *inquilino* sons who migrated to urban centres. As previously noted, the subject of integration of rural labourers into the larger, Chilean society is one of the central themes in the historiography of rural labourers. I argue that Gutiérrez's choice to volunteer should be seen as an act of integration into the nation and an act of participation into the wider world beyond the *hacienda*. Gutiérrez saw a chance to make a meaningful choice to transform his everyday life, and he took it. In the process, this throws doubt upon the image of the rural labourer as passive and disintegrated. Gutiérrez acknowledges himself as a historical actor, and his narrative serves as an example of agency in action.

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